THE GLOBE AND MAIL

SE National

HD **Globe Climate: What the rest of Canada can learn from the loss of Ontario's green energy dream; Also: Four First Nations in B.C. chart a low-carbon path to economic recovery; UN climate summer postponed**

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Good afternoon, and welcome to the first edition of Globe Climate, a newsletter about climate change and the environment.

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This week, the United Nations climate summit known as COP26 was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was supposed to serve as a deadline for governments to commit to more aggressive emissions-cutting goals. It's a good reminder of the challenges ahead after Canada announced last month the country's emissions increased by 15 megatonnes in 2018, to 729 megatonnes. Canada had pledged to reduce emissions by 30 per cent below 2005 levels. In real numbers, that means a reduction from 730 megatonnes in 2005 to 511 megatonnes in 2030.

As businesses reopen and economies around the world slowly restart, Ottawa is gathering ideas ahead of the next phase of the economic response to the pandemic, which is likely to involve a shift from short-term relief measures to policies aimed at shaping the economy on the other side of the crisis.

Now, let's catch you up on other news.

Noteworthy reporting this week:

* Ontario's plan to switch to renewables was already precarious before the Ford government rolled it back. Now, it should serve as a cautionary tale for communities that want to use COVID-19 relief to build sustainable infrastructure

* The elected leaders of the Haisla, Lax Kw'alaams, Metlakatla and Nisga'a have formed the First Nations Climate Initiative , saying their goal is to attract private-sector investment, bolster economic self-determination and address poverty in their communities

* Canada's more ambitious emissions targets and other climate change programs delayed by COVID-19

Photos of the week

A deeper dive

What the death of Ontario's green energy dream can teach other provinces about the challenges ahead

Matthew McClearn is an investigative reporter and data journalist on The Globe's environment team. For this week's deeper dive, he talks about renewable energy history in Ontario and where it's headed

Under the government of Premier Doug Ford, Ontario has aborted a decade-long transition to renewable energy. It has even moved to terminate two nearly completed wind farms, raising doubts about its motives (one was ostensibly terminated to protect bat populations, a premise recently rejected by the Ontario Superior Court) but leaving few doubts about its resolve. Other early promoters of wind and solar generation, most notably Germany, are also having second thoughts.

Initiated more than a decade ago, Ontario's energy revolution bequeathed cleaner air, but also sharply higher electricity bills, and it divided rural communities. Those unintended consequences will be top of mind as other provinces, such as Alberta, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan, ponder how to replace their aging coal fleets.

* The bad news is that Ontario's mistakes are not easily undone – although the Ford government has promised to lower rates, it has yet to reveal credible plans to do so.

* The good news is that other provinces needn't repeat them.

With renewable sources now highly cost-competitive with other methods of generating power, they certainly don't need to overpay.

They do, however, need to pay attention.

–Matthew

Read the full story here

Four First Nations in B.C. tout low-carbon path to post-pandemic economic recovery

This story was written by Brent Jang , a business reporter in The Globe and Mail's Vancouver bureau

Four First Nations in northern British Columbia are devising what they view as a low-carbon path to post-pandemic economic recovery on their traditional territories, highlighting a starring role for liquefied natural gas as a transition fuel to help combat climate change.

The elected leaders of the Haisla, Lax Kw'alaams, Metlakatla and Nisga'a have formed the First Nations Climate Initiative as a think tank.

The Goal: To attract private-sector investment, bolster economic self-determination and address poverty in their communities. And to "create a vibrant low-carbon economy out of the economic devastation COVID-19 has precipitated."

But why fund LNG? The four First Nations want to become equity partners in any future LNG plans in northwest British Columbia. Their ideas include earmarking a portion of LNG-related profits to help finance renewable energy projects and restoring forests.

And what about COVID-19? Eva Clayton, the elected president of the Nisga'a Nation, said collaboration among Indigenous groups is especially important today because the pandemic has rocked the economy, and it's crucial to think globally and act locally.

Read the full story here

What else you missed

* UN confirms year-long delay for crucial climate summit. Billed as the most important climate change summit since the 2015 talks that produced the Paris agreement, this year's meeting is moving to Nov. 1 to 12, 2021, because of the pandemic.

* Bike sales surge as Canadians leave their cars at home. The unintentional environmentally friendly side-effect of COVID-19 pandemic has prompted commuters, fitness buffs and families to go on bike-buying binges.

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* Europe, China and the U.S. are slowly reopening for business. But they're telling different stories when it comes to the environment . The course these giant economies set is crucial if the world is to have a fighting chance to head off the hallmarks of a fast-warming planet.

* How could Trudeau use COVID-19 relief to fight climate change? Environmental advocates and businesses are peppering Ottawa with ideas about everything from electric vehicles to clean power grids and buildings. But which ideas will gain the most momentum when the time comes to spend that money?

* Designers thinking of easy-to-reuse products. "If you invest in a chair and it serves you the way it should – the legs don't wobble, the arc of the back is comfortable – why would you ever replace it? Instead, you'll pass it down. Good design is about playing the long game and thinking beyond your own use of an object," said Tommy Smythe, founder of interior design firm Tom.

* B.C. forests watchdog finds sediment from road work affecting fish habitat. Its report says most of the contributing factors could have been avoided by following well-established best practices for erosion and sediment control, as the roads are a high risk to habitats in three of five watersheds it assessed.

Opinion and Analysis

* Yrjo Koskinen and Ari Pandes : "The recent alliance between unemployed oil well drillers and Clean Energy Canada to explore drilling for geothermal energy only further proves that such workers do not see oil and gas as an implacable foe of clean and renewable energy."

* Kelly Cryderman : "This government has no problem pursuing strategic measures when it comes to oil production or global energy markets. Now it needs to think long and hard about applying that same strategic thinking to the environment, and the province's environmental reputation."

* Lisa Helps : "Yet as leaders of Canadian cities in a post-COVID world with potential climate catastrophe on the horizon, we must have the courage to confront this sense of loss and take bold action nonetheless."

* Thelma Fayle : "If you Google it, you will find there isn't a single, high-end book about dandelions on the market. The absence of an elegant publication on an extraordinarily useful ancient plant is surprising."

Here's what readers have to say

A question from Jack Hanna: Hello, glad to see the new newsletter. I have investments. I want them to be green. But doing that can be difficult. Getting information on how to do it is difficult. How about stories on how an investor can make his portfolio green?

* Thanks for the question, Jack. Interest in environmental, social and governance issues (ESG) has grown dramatically in the past few years as investors look to companies that manage their carbon footprint and assess climate risks. ESG investing is now one of the biggest long-term trends in capital markets. At The Globe, we're committed to exploring the issues around mandatory climate-related disclosures in regulatory filings. This includes a future project to look at the TSX 60 on a few fronts – their carbon footprint, their disclosure to investors about climate risk and their plans for adapting their businesses. Ottawa's newest package of emergency credit support for large employers is notable in this regard. Companies are required to publish annual climate-related disclosure reports consistent with the international Financial Stability Board's Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures. Currently, few Canadian companies issue climate reports with the stringency set out by the task force. With regard to this newsletter, an investing section is an excellent idea. Stay tuned. In the meantime, you can find a Globe guide to responsible investing here . –Ryan MacDonald, senior editor – climate, environment and resources

Making waves

Each week The Globe will profile a young person making a difference in Canada. This week we're highlighting the work of Malaika Collette, making climate action accessible.

My name is Malaika Collette. I'm a 17-year-old climate activist in Peterborough, Ont. My activism began in the Youth Leadership in Sustainability program, where we were taught about the crisis and how to take action, and given a platform. My colleagues and I at Peterborough Youth Empowerment pushed for and succeeded in a climate emergency being declared in our city, and we have urged our school boards to take action and implement climate education. Challenge the systems. Change is possible.

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Currently, I'm working with Re-earth Initiative to make climate action accessible to all through toolkits and webinars. COVID-19 will not stop our activism. The climate crisis isn't stopping, so we must adjust accordingly and continue to demand action. Individuals can make a difference – by striving to reduce their carbon footprint at home, educating themselves and others on the crisis, and taking part in community actions.

Systemically, we must hold our governments accountable. Write to your politicians and tell them to prioritize the climate in every decision. The urgency of this crisis drives my passion to keep fighting. Make your voice heard –you can make a difference.

–Malaika

Do you know an engaged young person? Someone who represents the real engines pursuing change in the country? Email us at GlobeClimate@globeandmail.com to tell us about them.

Guides and explainers

* We've rounded up our reporters' content to help you learn about sustainable ways to travel , invest and to learn about our species at risk .

* If you like to read, here are books to help the environmentalist in you grow, as well as a downloadable e-book of Micro skills – Little Steps to Big Change .

We want to hear from you. Email us: GlobeClimate@globeandmail.com . Do you know someone who needs this newsletter? Send them to our Newsletters page.

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